



What is Ebola?

Ebola is caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks have appeared sporadically in Africa. The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, primarily affecting Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

- Fever (greater than 38.0° C or 100.4° F) - this is the most common symptom
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to a person who is ill with Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

Who is at risk for catching Ebola?

The outbreak is occurring in the countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in West Africa. People who have been in those countries and who have had contact with people with Ebola are at the highest risk of becoming ill with Ebola. Persons at risk for developing Ebola may need to go into quarantine. If symptoms develop, the person may need to go into isolation.

Is everyone traveling from Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia at risk for Ebola?

No. People who have been in these countries in the past 21 days but were not around people who have Ebola are at very low risk of developing Ebola. However, these people should be assessed by the Department of Public Health to determine risk of developing Ebola and monitored for symptoms of Ebola. <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Default.aspx>

Do employees need to be excluded if someone in their household or a close contact recently returned from Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Liberia within the last 21 days?

No. In this situation, the employee should continue to work and go about daily activities.

What do I do if an employee recently traveled internationally?

Employees that have recently returned (in the past 21 days) from the countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia (and two rural districts of Congo) should be assessed by the Iowa Department of Public Health to determine potential risk of Ebola. Employees that have traveled to other countries in Africa or other continents are not currently at risk for acquiring Ebola.

What should businesses do if they suspect they have an employee at risk for Ebola (or an employee exposed to Ebola)?

Immediately contact the Iowa Department of Public Health at 800-362-2736 or 515-323-4360 for guidance.

What is isolation?

Isolation (isolating a person from contact with other people) is done when a person has symptoms of a disease and could potentially spread this disease to others. It is most often done in a health care setting since the person is ill.

What is quarantine?

Quarantine (quarantining a person away from contact with other people) is done when a susceptible person has been exposed to a disease, but is not ill. This is typically done at the person's home, and continues for one incubation period after the last time the person was exposed to the disease (21 days in the case of Ebola).

How do we clean environmental surfaces?

Even though the Ebola virus is very fragile and will only survive in the environment for a short period of time, cleaning contaminated areas is recommended. No disinfectants are specifically recommended for use against Ebola; however, disinfectants labeled for use on non-enveloped viruses (i.e. norovirus, rotavirus, adenovirus or poliovirus) are effective against Ebola, and can be used on surfaces thought to be contaminated. No additional cleaning measures are recommended at this time for Ebola; however, as the influenza season is about to begin, additional cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should be considered to reduce the spread of influenza.

Is there an Ebola vaccine?

Currently there is no vaccine for Ebola.